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ABSTRACT

This publication reviews five information sources about new designs and recommendations for principal preparation programs. In "The Landscape of Leadership Preparation: Reframing the Education of School Administrators," Joseph Murphy examines the nature of current problems in administrator preparation. He argues that before they can draw sound conclusions about the nature of future administrator training programs reformers must possess three things: a comprehensive understanding of the history of preparation; a thorough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of current programs; and a clear vision of the future of education, school, and leadership. In "The Principalship in an Era of Transformation," Joseph Murphy and Philip Hallinger use a macrolevel lens to analyze ways in which social, cultural, and political variables exert pressure for fundamental educational reform. They identify several forces currently influencing policy changes in schools, examining the impact each has on the principalship, before discussing implications for future preparation and professional development of principals. In "Developing the Strategic Thinking of Instructional Leaders," Philip Hallinger and C. E. McCary stress the importance of developing strategic thinking skills in aspiring principals. They present a problem-based learning (PBL) computer simulation that teaches students to think strategically about instructional leadership and school improvement. Next, Richard A. Schmuck describes a two-year experimental principal preparation project that combines cooperation and teamwork, institutes on instructional leadership, and internships with mentors in "Beyond Academics in the Preparation of Educational Leaders: Four Years of Action Research." And finally, in "Problem-Based Learning for Administrators," Edwin Bridges provides an informative account of his evolving understanding and application of problem-based learning in training school administrators. (LMI)

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The New Face of Principal Preparation

Linda Lumsden

It is no secret that the process used to groom individuals to become school leaders misses the mark in many respects. One charge frequently leveled against preparation programs is that they are unbalanced; students are saturated with educational theory while enrolled in graduate programs but receive scant exposure to the types of professional challenges they are likely to encounter in the real world.

It is not unusual for individuals to be certified as principals without ever having to demonstrate their ability to provide instructional leadership. Although some programs make opportunities to practice leadership skills available to students, in many cases insufficient time is spent carefully designing, and then supervising, these experiences.

Another criticism is that aspiring administrators often enter the field with a limited knowledge of curriculum and instruction. In addition, findings on effective teaching, staff development, and organizational change often fail to be woven into the fabric of principal preparation. Research in the area of cognitive psychology, including findings related to learning patterns of adults, is also often overlooked.

As calls for educational reform and restructuring increase, it is crucial that we accurately assess deficiencies in current training programs and then experiment with new designs of principal preparation programs, so that we better equip individuals to perform competently once they leave the protected confines of academia.

Joseph Murphy writes that reformers must possess three things before they can draw sound conclusions about what future administrator preparation programs should look like: A comprehensive understanding of the history of preparation; a thorough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of current programs; and a clear vision about the future of good education, schooling, and leadership. It is only after engaging in an exhaustive assessment of the shortcomings of current administrator preparation programs that Murphy offers recommendations for improving administrator training.

Joseph Murphy and Philip Hallinger use a macro-level lens to analyze ways in which social, cultural, and political variables are exerting pressure for fundamental educational reform. They identify several forces currently influencing policy changes in schools, examining the impact each has on the nature of the principalship, before discussing implications for future preparation and professional development of principals.

Philip Hallinger and C. E. McCary stress the importance of developing strategic thinking skills in aspiring principals. They note that problem-based learning (PBL), which simulates the kinds of dilemmas typically faced by principals, can improve these skills. Hallinger and Murphy focus on a problem-based computer simulation that teaches students to think strategically about instructional leadership and school improvement.

Richard A. Schmuck describes a two-year experi-

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mental principal preparation project that combined cooperation and teamwork, institutes on instructional leadership, and internships with mentors. Schmuck also shares findings of four evaluation studies conducted to assess the effectiveness of the experimental program.

Edwin Bridges, having spent five years developing, field-testing, and adapting problem-based learning for use with educational administration students, speaks from experience when he asserts that PBL can be used to create a better fit between school administrators' formal preparation and the professional world of educational administration.

Murphy, Joseph. **The Landscape of Leadership Preparation: Reframing the Education of School Administrators.** Newbury Park, Calif.: Corwin Press, 1992. 228 pages. Copies available from Corwin Press, Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Newbury Park, CA 91320. 805-499-9734. $21.95 + $2.00 handling (prepaid).

Unless a problem is defined correctly, solutions proposed to remedy it will probably fail to have the desired impact. To avoid the pitfalls of crafting solutions to an ill-defined problem, Murphy devotes the bulk of this book to clearly tracing and framing the nature of current problems in administrator preparation.

After identifying pressures for reform of educational leadership training, and tracing the evolution of preparation programs, Murphy, who chairs the Department of Educational Leadership at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, analyzes the deeply ingrained weaknesses of the current system. He asserts that it is "seriously flawed and . . . wanting in nearly every aspect."

In addition to identifying problems in the content and pedagogy of preparation programs, Murphy asserts that methods used to recruit and select students, assess academic fitness, and certify and select principals and superintendents also need to be revamped.

The transition of the U.S. from an industrial society to a post-industrial society has many implications for the way schools relate to their environment, the way they are organized and managed, and the nature of teaching and learning, says Murphy. He believes the overriding challenge is for administrators to "lead the transition from the bureaucratic model of schooling, with its emphasis on minimal levels of education for many, to a post-industrial adaptive model, with the goal of educating all youngsters well." He presents two metaphors to convey the changing nature of the principalship: the administrator as a servant/leader and as an organizational architect.

Guidelines for shaping administrator preparation programs to meet the challenges of tomorrow's schools are laid out in the final chapter. Murphy defines the purpose and goals he believes should shape future training programs, and cites several principles that should guide program development.

Murphy, Joseph, and Philip Hallinger. **"The Principalship in an Era of Transformation."** *Journal of Educational Administration* 30:3 (1992): 77-88.

This article looks at changes unfolding in the role of the principal and the implications of these changes for the preparation and professional development of future principals. Murphy and Hallinger, professors at Vanderbilt University, identify six forces fueling fundamental changes in the policy world surrounding schools: An increasing understanding of the value of education; worldwide economic anemia; a mandate to educate *all* students in an increasingly diverse population; the changing political landscape, in which grassroots democracy and citizen participation are in vogue; the conviction that bureaucracies—including bureaucratic school structures—are not working; and the desire of centralized governmental units to transfer complex, tenacious problems to local levels. Political responses set in motion by these forces include open enrollment, school-based management, enhanced accountability, and systemic decentralization.

The authors next turn their attention to the changing nature of the principalship, noting that the degree of complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty in a principal's work environment, as well as the sheer volume of work, have risen significantly over the past five years. The work lives of principals are further complicated by central offices struggling to

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retain their authority while simultaneously attempting to decentralize.

Principals today are also being encouraged to lead in a more proactive manner. There is a call for principals to exhibit transformational, rather than transactional, leadership. Strong interpersonal communication skills are mandatory if they are to interact with others in an open, consultative, collaborative manner.

More than ever before, state Murphy and Hallinger, principals are involved in helping to strengthen and support organizational members' abilities to find solutions to local problems, rather than implementing decisions handed down from above. Also, the accountability of leaders has assumed greater prominence, since decentralized schools have greater responsibility for justifying their decisions and actions to others who have a stake in school governance and management.

These changes in the principal's role have implications for the design and content of principal preparation programs. The authors note that training programs need "a continuing focus on instructional leadership, but with renewed attention to the general process skills needed for effective group leadership." A sound grasp of curriculum, instruction, and change implementation should serve as the base from which a principal's sense of leadership emerges. Therefore, preparation programs should cultivate expertise in these areas.

Hallinger, Philip, and C. E. McCary. **Developing the Strategic Thinking of Instructional Leaders.** Cambridge, Mass.: The National Center for Educational Leadership, March 1992. 23 pages. Available from The National Center for Educational Leadership, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 444 Gutman Library, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138. 617-496-3784. $4.00.

This article is based on an emerging view of leadership that "places emphasis on the thought processes that underlie principals' behavior, rather than on behaviors themselves." According to Hallinger and McCary, principals who have the most positive effect on student learning tend to adopt a strategic approach to instructional leadership.

Strategic thinking involves skillful planning, forethought, awareness of the interdependence of actions within a social system, and purposeful coordination of resources. As the authors note, "It is not enough for principals to have a repertoire of behaviors; they must know how and when to use them, and monitor their effects on student learning."

Hallinger and McCary note that problem-based approaches to administrator training may help students to more fully comprehend the interrelatedness of research, theory, and practice. Instead of studying theory in isolation, problem-based learning gives students the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts within the context of an administrative problem. The authors describe Vanderbilt University's "In the Center of Things" (ITCOT), an interactive, problem-based computer simulation designed to teach aspiring principals to think strategically about situations involving instructional leadership and school improvement.

Schmuck, Richard A. **Beyond Academics in the Preparation of Educational Leaders: Four Years of Action Research.** *Oregon School Study Council Report* 33:2 (Winter 1993). 9 pages. Available from Oregon School Study Council, 1787 Agate St., Eugene, OR 97403. 503-346-5044. $5.00.

Schmuck describes a two-year experimental principal preparation program designed to address some of the weaknesses prevalent in traditional programs. Twenty-five teacher-leaders were chosen to participate in the program at the University of Oregon's Division of Educational Policy and Management, where Schmuck is a professor. The program devoted equal attention to instructional leadership and school management, and provided participants with over 750 hours of school-based work under the guidance of a mentor.

The first year of the project, supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, incorporated seven weekend institutes on instructional leadership. The 15-hour institutes gave students a total of 105 hours on administrative skills and contemporary concepts in instructional leadership, compared with 30 hours in the division's traditional curriculum. During the summer after the first year, participants completed four school management courses and went through the NASSP assessment center for aspiring principals.

The second year of the program featured an in-depth, field-based mentorship. In conjunction with the school-based internships, five seminars were held to provide opportunity for reflection by both interns and mentors on the internship experience. Students completed coursework on management concerns during their second summer in the program. Throughout, emphasis was placed on problem solving, communication, and team-building.

Four substudies, designed to assess the effective-

ness of the program, found that members of the experimental program were much more satisfied with their training than were members of a control set. They also had greater success in procuring and maintaining administrative jobs, and appeared to perform at a higher level during their first year as administrators.

Bridges, Edwin M., with the assistance of Philip Hallinger. **Problem-Based Learning for Administrators.** Eugene, Ore.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1992. 164 pages. Available from ERIC/CEM Publications, 1787 Agate St., Eugene, OR 97403. 503-346-5044. $10.95.

In this book, Bridges, director of the Prospective Principals' Program at Stanford University, provides an informative account of his evolving understanding and application of problem-based learning in training school administrators. Until recently, this instructional strategy has been used primarily to train medical students, but Bridges has been instrumental in demonstrating that PBL shows promise for enhancing administrator training programs.

Having spent five years developing, field-testing, and adapting PBL for use in educational management classes, Bridges speaks from experience when he shares his "impressionistic and illustrative" ideas about what students learn through exposure to this instructional approach.

Unlike approaches in which instructors lecture or lead a discussion, students in a PBL environment are presented with a hypothetical situation that addresses some problem they are apt to face as future principals. After exposure to theory and research that have some bearing on the problem, small groups of students wrestle with how to use this knowledge most effectively to formulate a solution. The form of PBL used by Bridges emphasizes three major goals: the development of administrative skills; the development of problem-solving skills; and the acquisition of the knowledge base that underlies administrative practice.

Bridges describes how traditional roles of students and instructors are altered when a problem-based learning approach is used. He offers ideas about how to ease the transition for both parties, and suggests ways of minimizing students' frustration as they begin to adapt to and develop a sense of competence in their new role. In addition, Bridges identifies special challenges and obstacles that often arise in the midst of implementing PBL, and offers strategies for overcoming them. □

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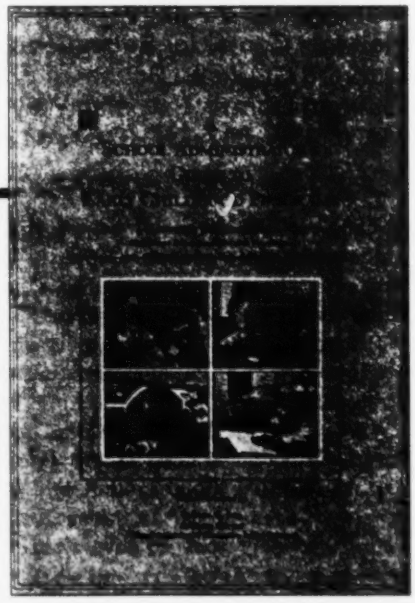
A School Administrator's Guide to Early Childhood Programs



Written by Lawrence J. Schweinhart of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, this book is an important resource for administrators bringing preschool programs into the elementary school setting. Looking at different approaches to a child development curriculum, it explores the importance of early childhood education. 72 pp. Member price, $20. Non-member price, $26.95. Add $3.00 for shipping and handling. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Send check or purchase order to:

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